

VZCZCXRO7768
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #1358 2101442
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 281442Z JUL 08
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2292
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001358

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2028

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY DEMOLISHES BEIT HANINA HOME

REF: 2007 JERUSALEM 02183

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Jerusalem Municipality demolished part of an apartment building belonging to Majid Abu Ayshah in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Hanina on July 28, stating that the building exceeded its permit and that the Municipality was legally obligated to uphold the court-ordered demolition. Local contacts said the Abu Ayshah family appealed to the courts to delay the demolition, but the courts upheld the order. Prominent Palestinians spoke out against the demolition. End Summary.

MUNICIPALITY CARRIES OUT DEMOLITION

¶2. (C) The Jerusalem Municipality demolished part of a four-story apartment building belonging to Majid Abu Ayshah on July 28, stating that the building was built illegally. (Note: The ConGen intervened with the Municipality at the request of PM Salam Fayyad in October to delay the demolition of this home, per Ref. End note.) Advisor to Jerusalem's Mayor Elad Halevy told PolOff the building exceeded its permit and the illegal upper floors would be demolished. He said the courts ordered this demolition on July 21 and the city was obligated to fulfill the orders.

¶3. (C) According to ICAHD Coordinator Meir Margalit, the Abu Ayshah family had appealed to the court on July 28 in a last minute attempt to stall the demolition, but the court upheld the decision to demolish the building. Abu Ayshah's neighbor Hussein Abu Dayya told PolOff that Abu Ayshah was arrested and would remain in prison until he paid the Municipality's demolition fee.

¶4. (C) PolOff observed the course of the demolition from 8:30am - 12:30pm. Neighbors said the Israeli police entered the Abu Ayshah building around 3:30 a.m. and forcibly removed the families living there. The police closed the streets around the building to traffic, and began the demolition around 9:00 a.m.

PROMINENT PALESTINIANS CALL FOR PEACE, CRITICIZE ISRAEL

¶5. (C) PolOff observed 50-100 Palestinians protesting in the street near the demolition site and several prominent Palestinians on-site speaking to the press. PA Presidential Chief of Staff Rafiq Husseini said to press that Palestinians should not allow Israeli actions to drag them into more violence. Advisor to the Prime Minister Hatem Abd al-Qader complained to PolOff that the police handled him roughly while he was investigating the demolition. Grand Mufti Muhammad Hussein told PolOff that home demolitions only serve to radicalize the Palestinian population and Israel's actions undermine peace discussions.

